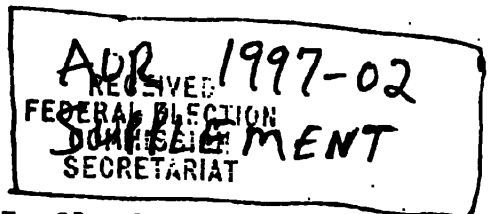


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**Facsimile Transmission**

To: Brad Litchfield  
From: Jan Baran  
Date: February 27, 1997  
Pages to Follow: 2  
User Number: 0799  
Client Number: 74564-1  
Fax Number: 219-3923  
Recipient's Phone Number: 219-3690

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Brad—

I will call you regarding this recent development.

— Jan

Please contact the Fax operator at (202) 429-7330 if you do not receive this facsimile message in its entirety. Thank you.

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# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 12, 1997

The Honorable Ray H. LaHood  
U.S. House of Representatives  
329 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Colleague:

This responds to your letter of February 11, 1997, signed in your capacity as Co-Chairman of the Bipartisan Retreat Planning Committee, regarding the Bipartisan Congressional Retreat, which will take place in Hershey, Pennsylvania on March 7-9, 1997. An identical response is being sent to Representative Skaggs, who co-signed the letter in his capacity as Retreat Committee Co-Chairman.

As described in your letter and in conversations between your representatives and Committee counsel, the Retreat Committee has invited Members and their families to the retreat and offered to pay the cost of their transportation, lodging and meals. Those costs will be paid with a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts, which is being administered by The Aspen Institute. The balance of the costs are to be paid through attendance fees charged to the attendees.

Your letter (1) requests that the Committee grant a waiver of the gift rule (House Rule 51) to allow each participating Member to accept, from the Retreat Committee, travel expenses for the retreat for all of the members of his or her immediate family, and (2) inquires whether a Member may use campaign funds (a) to transport his or her family from home to Washington for the trip to Hershey, or directly to Hershey, and return, or (b) to pay the attendance fees.

Regarding your request for a waiver, as your letter notes, the gift rule provides that a Member travelling at the expense of a private source in connection with official duties is limited to accepting, in addition, "travel expenses incurred on behalf of either the spouse or a child of the Member" (clause 2(d)(4)). In view of the purposes of the retreat, as described in your letter, and the important role that the presence of families is to play in accomplishing those purposes, a waiver of this limitation is appropriate here. Accordingly, the Committee hereby waives the cited gift rule provision to allow each participating Member to accept, from the Retreat Committee, travel expenses for the retreat for his or her spouse, as well as any of his or her minor children.

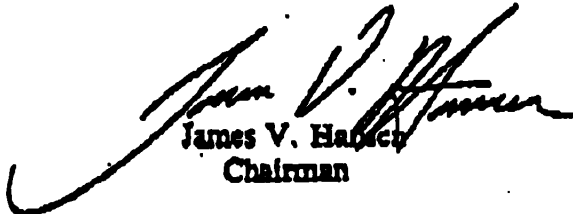
As to whether Members may use their campaign funds to pay the attendance fees and the family travel costs described above, the pertinent provision of the House rules is Rule 43(6). As here relevant, that provision prohibits Members from converting campaign funds to personal use and requires that campaign funds be used for bona fide campaign or political purposes. In view of the purposes of the retreat, and the role which the presence of the families is to play in

The Honorable Ray H. LaHood  
February 12, 1997  
Page 2

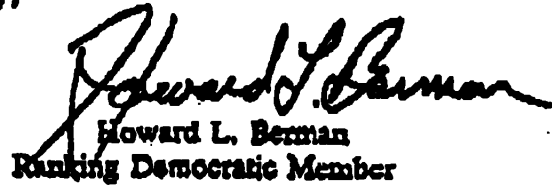
accomplishing those purposes, the Committee's opinion is that proposed uses of campaign funds here in issue would not violate that provision, provided that expenditures made in behalf of children are limited to minor children. However, you also need to consult the Federal Election Commission on this matter, as pursuant to the Federal Election Campaign Act, the Commission also has jurisdiction over it.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Committee's Office of Advice and Education at extension 5-3787.

Sincerely,



James V. Hanft  
Chairman



Howard L. Berman  
Ranking Democratic Member

JVH/HLB:jev